



10th Language and Development Conference

Lagoon Beach Hotel, Cape Town, 15 to 17 October 2013

Programme: Extracts

Message from H.E. Angie Motshekga, **Minister of Basic Education**

I am delighted to welcome you to the 10th International Language and Development Conference which is being hosted in Sub-Saharan Africa for the second time since its inception in 1993. Let me take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the conference conveners, AU-ACALAN, British Council, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) – South Africa, PRAESA and UNESCO.

The conference seeks to support the Millennium Development Goals and among the key questions which the conference will deliberate is the role of English in an increasingly multicultural world. The AU-African Academy of Languages (AU-ACALAN) asserts that knowing a number of languages well is an absolutely normal state for human beings and puts forward this metaphor:

“What kind of garden do we want? One with just one kind of flower, or one with many beautiful flowers?”

Professor Alfred Mtenje, University of Malawi presents a view that may sum up the reality of learning English in African and multilingual contexts:

“It is important to explain that multilingual education and its partnership with English should not create the wrong impression that the multilingual education policy is a replacement for English.”

Governments throughout the world are trying to find ways in which English and other languages can work as complementary to each other. The key is to understand that the primary role of learning English is to act as a lingua franca among multilingual communities for whom English is an additional language. It is the sole working language of the Asian bloc and also acts as the main lingua franca in the BRICS group of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The multilingual speaker of English now vastly outnumbers the English native speaker. This has important implications for the varieties of English to be taught and the way in which it can be taught. There is no longer the need for non-native learners to approximate a native speaker variety of English; rather, they need to use English so that they can be understood by fellow multilinguals in national, regional and international settings.

The English language curriculum, thus, needs to provide exposure in intercultural competence. This could include opportunity to study relevant literatures in English such as novels, poems and cultural texts written in local varieties of English. There is a huge treasury of African and Asian literature and cultural texts in English that can be used as teaching materials.

The importance of local languages as languages of learning and teaching cannot be overestimated. If children are to master cognitively complex concepts, they can do this better in languages with which they are familiar. Learning subjects such as science and mathematics through English when their English proficiency is not sufficiently developed is sentencing them to failure. This often leads to tragic personal consequences for children and families, and also represents waste on a national scale.

To this end in South Africa, from 2012, the phasing in of English in the curriculum starts in Grade 1, where English is offered as a subject at the First Additional Language whilst the Home Language is the language of learning and teaching in the first four years of schooling commencing from Grade R (reception year). In these early grades of schooling the focus is also on developing fluency and literacy in local languages to develop children's sense of identity and self-worth. It also provides a key role for selected local languages in education and thus helps maintain these. Being literate in local languages will not only help children learn English, but will

also allow them to view English critically, as a language of international communication.

Evaluations of effective non-formal education programmes and mother tongue-based multilingual formal education in Ethiopia show that 'local and regional language development has increased and democratized local expertise, skills, industry (translation services, printing and publishing), and permitted greater participation of women and other marginalized groups in local and regional decision-making'.

The information technology and creative sectors have found that investing in African languages opens doors for many people. Nigeria has the second largest film industry in the world. A key element of its success story is multilingualism; 56 per cent of the films are in African languages and 44 per cent in English suggests that 'Nollywood's' own images have a healing effect following the trauma of colonization. The products and services of the ICT and the creative sectors, and also language industries, require personnel with complex linguistic communicative competences.

The potential of African languages

There is a view that wanting to integrate African languages into the formal school system requires too much time and resources to develop the vocabulary of these languages, to train teachers, as well as to prepare teaching and learning materials.

Research and practice prove that languages develop through use and that African languages can be used as languages of education right up to the end of tertiary education. In Mali a committed university professor teaches physics and chemistry in the local language. In Somalia it took nine years to develop the Somali language and is used up to Year 12 in formal education. Ethiopia, one of the poorest countries in the world, has developed 23 languages for use as mediums of instruction in primary schools and advanced 13 languages for similar use in about 15 years.

Currently, South Africa has embarked on an **Incremental Introduction of African languages (IIAL)** policy. The IIAL policy will be implemented incrementally commencing in Grade 1 in 2015 and will continue until 2026 when it will be implemented in Grade 12.

Research and current effective practice in education suggests a much higher rate of return on investment from mother tongue-based multilingual education in the medium and long-term. The lessons learnt from mother tongue and bilingual

education in Africa is that the combination of optimizing language use and adopting relevant and high-quality curricula, teaching methods and materials will result in higher achievement, lower drop-out and repeater rates throughout the education system and will result in more learners being able to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

We must see multilingualism and cultural diversity as assets and local languages as resources that should enrich us all as a global community. May I end by urging you to engage robustly in the language discourses tabled for this conference and enhance its objectives.

I thank you.

Ms A Motshekga, MP

The Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL)

Dr Jennifer Joshua, Director: Curriculum, Implementation & Quality Improvement (GET)

The Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) policy intends to promote and develop the previously marginalised languages thereby increasing the use of African languages by all learners in the school system. The policy also aims to increase access to languages beyond English and Afrikaans by all learners, and promote social cohesion as a significant way of preserving heritage and culture.

The IIAL will require learners to offer three languages, one of which will be an African language. The previously marginalized languages will be prioritized. The IIAL policy will be implemented incrementally commencing in Grade 1 in 2015 and will continue until 2026 when it will be implemented in Grade 12.

Full implementation of the IIAL will be preceded by a pilot in Grade 1 in 2014. The pilot will target schools that are currently not offering African languages.

The successful implementation of the IIAL is reliant on teacher availability. DBE and provinces are working on a model to ensure incremental provision of African language teachers in grades that are implementing IIAL. This is to ensure that schools that are implementing are provided with qualified African language teachers. The Department will also ensure that there is enough LTSM available in the previously marginalised languages at FAL level.

The instructional time for Grades 1 and 2 will need to be extended to accommodate the teaching of a third language by two hours per week (24 minutes per day). Grade 3 will need to be extended by three hours per week (36 minutes per day). Grades 4-12 will need to be extended by five hours per week (one hour per day).

- **Jennifer Joshua** is the Director: Curriculum Implementation and Quality Improvement (GET) in the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Her experience in education spans 35 years and she has served in different capacities as a Foundation Phase teacher; teacher trainer; subject advisor; provincial curriculum co-ordinator. Her responsibilities in DBE in the last ten years include the curriculum project manager for GET (2003-2006); Teacher Recruitment: Funza Lushaka project manager (2006-2008); Director: Foundations for Learning (2008-2011); Director: LTSM (2011- 2013); Director: Curriculum (June 2013 to date). Dr Joshua has a keen interest in issues of language and the research for

both her Master of Education and Doctor of Education degrees were on language policy implementation.

The Role of Lingua Franca Kiswahili in Sub-Saharan Africa

Dr Nancy Kahaviza Ayodi, Maasai Mara University, Kenya

Chair: Professor Jean Baxen

Rapporteur: Amalia Dickie

A lingua franca (or working language, bridge language, vehicular language, unifying language) is a language systematically used to make communication possible between people not sharing a mother tongue, in particular when it's a third language, distinct from both mother tongues. I investigate and examine the role of the lingua-franca Kiswahili in Sub-Saharan Africa and examine and establish the opportunities that exist for Kiswahili language, its role, challenges to its growth and possible solutions coupled with its future beyond 2015. My objective is to use my research to help language policy makers in Sub-Saharan Africa to develop Kiswahili so as to equal other lingua-francas in the region. Thus, Kiswahili has the opportunity of becoming the language of identity and unification for Sub-Saharan Africa.

- **Nancy Kahaviza Ayodi** is currently teaching at Maasai Mara University, Narok, Kenya and holds a Doctoral degree in Kiswahili: 'Matumizi ya Tashtiti katika Ttamthilia za Kiswahili.'

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